

EQAC Support for Board of Supervisors Environmental Legislative Positions
August 9, 2017

The Board of Supervisors' adopted 2017 Fairfax County Legislative Program included the following position statements on the "Environment" page (page 9) of the adopted Legislative Program document:

Global Climate Change/Environmental Sustainability Initiatives

Support efforts to reduce the County's greenhouse gas emissions and operational demand for energy through efficiency, conservation, and education. The basis for these efforts is Fairfax County's strategic direction and commitment to achieve environmental and energy goals, including those set forth in the Board's 2004 Environmental Agenda, the 2009 Energy Policy, and the County's Comprehensive Plan.

Support incentives and opportunities for the expansion of renewable energy and energy efficiency initiatives, such as:

- Funding of renewable energy grant programs and incentives to assist the development and growth of energy businesses and technologies, such as renewable distributed energy generation;
- Opportunities for consumers to purchase or generate renewable energy, including expanding the availability of net metering programs, which allow eligible customers to offset their power consumption by selling self-generated power back to the energy grid. Legislation in 2015 raised the cap on the amount of energy that may be net metered by eligible customers, but more flexibility is needed to maximize the cost-effectiveness of larger projects.
- State income tax incentives for businesses or residents to defray a portion of the cost of new construction or improvements which save energy and mitigate adverse environmental impacts.
- Increased flexibility in the restrictions governing third-party power purchase agreements (PPAs) for renewable energy. PPAs can facilitate the adoption of renewable energy by reducing the up-front costs, thus assisting in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other forms of pollution. Legislation was passed in 2013 to authorize a limited pilot program for such arrangements, subject to certain system-size requirements and an overall cap of 50 MW on generation. (*Reaffirms previous positions.*)

Land Conservation

Support the Governor's goal to preserve 400,000 acres of open space and working lands statewide, including the Administration's initiative to protect 1,000 "Virginia Treasures," which are properties with particular conservation value, such as wetlands or riparian buffers. Support state incentives that promote donations to park authorities or associated foundations. Further, continue to support prioritizing the Virginia Land Preservation Tax Credit to encourage the preservation of land for public use. In addition to other benefits, the preservation of open space contributes to watershed protection, an important issue as the state works to reduce nutrient pollution in the Chesapeake Bay. (*Reaffirms previous position.*)

Reducing Environmental Contamination from Plastic and Paper Bags

Support legislation or other efforts which would encourage the use of reusable shopping bags, consistent with the County's waste reduction goals and environmental stewardship efforts. As in previous sessions, it is anticipated that legislation to ban plastic bags or impose a fee for their use may be introduced again in 2017. Such legislation would need to be examined by the County for efficacy, cost, and ease of administration. *(Updates and reaffirms previous position.)*

At its August 9, 2017 meeting, EQAC, through a unanimous vote of members present, approved a motion to recommend that the Board of Supervisors retain these position in its next legislative program, with one editorial update: the first paragraph of the Global Climate Change/Environmental Sustainability Initiatives item should reference the recently adopted Fairfax County Environmental Vision document.